



LOGAN P. WILLIAMS—THE TECH

Students protest the new dining plan next fall by eating food in Baker Dining yesterday evening that they had prepared themselves.

More unrest over new dining plan

Fifteen hundred sign online petition, 25 stage Baker protest

By Deborah Chen
STAFF REPORTER

Student opposition to the proposed House Dining Advisory Group continues this week. A major new petition launched on Wednesday evening has amassed over 1,298 signatures from undergraduates as of early Friday morning. On Thursday, students held an “eat-in” protest at Baker House to show that they could cook for themselves.

On Wednesday at 5 p.m., an online petition against the dining plan was launched at <http://sayNO.mit.edu>. This petition is the fourth major petition against dining this term, and the first one conducted online.

It gathered over 1,400 signatures

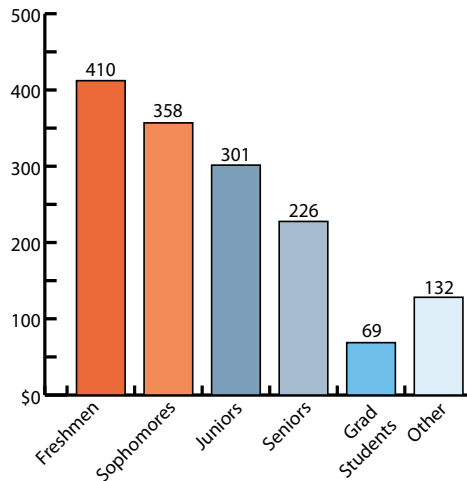
from students, graduate students and others in less than 24 hours.

On Thursday, roughly 25 students, mostly from East Campus, brought their own food and prepared it in the Baker Dining Hall in a demonstration against the new dining plan. The students said they wanted to show that they didn’t need dining halls.

Online petition against dining is largest yet

The petition argues that the plan did not “adequately consider student opinion,” will “destroy the community and culture” of both dining and non-dining dorms, harm FSILGs and clubs, and “double the cost of food.”

Addressed to MIT President Susan J. Hockfield, Chancellor Philip L. Clay PhD ’78, Dean for Student Life



SOURCE: SAYNO.MIT.EDU

Substantially more freshman and sophomores signed the online petition, but even seniors and graduate students has signed onto the petition in numbers.

Dining, Page 10

Athena printing changes coming

Hold-and-print system may get rolled out this January

By Divya Srinivasan
STAFF REPORTER

Over the past year, Information Services and Technology, the UA, and the MIT Administration have been examining how the Athena printing system can be improved to maximize efficiency and cut costs.

Several changes have already been made. Copytech now maintains printer hardware and supplies, and there is a now a centralized budget that pays for dorm printer supplies, so students don’t need to steal paper from Athena clusters or buy paper using dorm budgets.

INSIDE

Changes to Athena may include more than just printing, p. 13

Bigger changes to printing are being considered, such as the introduction of a print quota, and switching to a system that will not print until the user is physically at the printer. Other changes, like adding scanners to Athena clusters, are also being planned (see sidebar, p. 13).

The initial rollout date for the changes to Athena is scheduled for IAP, when printers in all Athena clusters will switch to hold-and-release, and scanners will be added to select locations.

Working group makes recommendations

Last fall, the Institute-wide Planning Task Force suggested Athena should move to a “greener” printing process to reduce waste, also improve the use of Athena cluster space.

As a result, Dean for Undergraduate Education Daniel E. Hastings SM ’78 and Marilyn T. Smith, Head of IS&T, created an Athena working group in March, with the help of the UA and Student Information Processing Board (SIPB).

The working group found that printing costs at MIT are around \$270,000 annually, and that students have a strong interest in keeping Athena clusters at MIT. Initial recommendations included:

- Implementation of a “hold-and-release” system, in which jobs won’t print until a student visits the printer and selects them
- Adding centrally-supplied dorm printers and library printers to the public system
- Redistributing printers to more convenient locations
- Limiting free printing to 3,000 pages, with a nominal fee for more pages.

IS&T and the UA are currently evaluating these proposals.

Hold-and-release model

The hold-and-release model for Athena printing would

Athena printing, Page 13

IN SHORT

PBE brothers haven’t been told when they will be required to move out of their house, since the Cambridge License Commission has not yet evaluated MIT’s request to revoke PBE’s housing license. The Commission was originally scheduled to review MIT’s eviction request at their Oct. 26 meeting, but it has deferred consideration at PBE’s asking. The Commission has not scheduled a new date for PBE.

Gonzalo Guillen, accused of stabbing a fellow Anna’s Tacqueria employee in October, is scheduled for a hearing today.

“Choose to Reuse” takes place in Lobby 13 today. Items can be dropped off from 8:30 a.m. to 11 a.m., and “free stuff” will be available from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Separately, remember that **ad hoc surplus items** are frequently posted to the reuse

mailing list; see <http://web.mit.edu/reuse> for more information. The reuse list is wildly successful and thousands of items are given away for free each year, ranging from trivial items to pieces of equipment valued at thousands of dollars.

Airport shuttles for \$10 are available on Tuesday and Wednesday, before Thanksgiving. Reserve in advance at <http://dof-web.mit.edu/shuttles/>.

MIT is #1 in *Business Insider* magazine’s “America’s Best Colleges.” We scored 4.61/5 ahead of Stanford (4.49), Harvard (4.46), Yale (4.39), and Princeton (4.37). Go Tech!

The Dining Plan is in the lead for APO’s Ugliest Manifestation on Campus. Surprise! It’s beating out the Rotting Jack-o-Lantern \$287.21 to \$34.87, page 11.

Send news information and tips to news@tech.mit.edu.



ANDREW SWAYZE—THE TECH

A silver RV made to look like a giant toaster appeared on the dot by Building 54 yesterday. The owners were offering visitors free toast.

THE VALUE OF HUMOR

Comedy is all about the truth, and how sometimes you have to lie to get to the truth.
OPN, p. 5



END THESE FARM SUBSIDIES

They’re expensive, they benefit few, and they don’t even work. **OPN, p. 5**



A HIGH SCHOOL FILM WORTH WATCHING

Easy A wants to be like *Mean Girls* — it’s actually much better.
ARTS, p. 9

TRADING PLAYERS HURTS THE GAME

What does it even mean to have teams when players move around so much?
SPO, p. 16

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Bernanke to castigate China for continuing its currency games

By Sewell Chan
THE NEW YORK TIMES

WASHINGTON — Ben S. Bernanke, the Federal Reserve chairman, plans to argue Friday that a “two-speed global recovery,” with the richest countries lagging behind fast-growing emerging markets like China and India, is hampering the cooperation needed for worldwide economic expansion.

Bernanke is expected to say that currency undervaluation by countries with a surplus, like China, is causing imbalances in global growth and trade. This is a main point the Obama administration made — with limited success — when leaders of the Group of 20 economic powers gathered last week in South Korea.

The Fed released Thursday the prepared text of the speech Bernanke is scheduled to deliver Friday at a European Central Bank conference in Frankfurt, Germany, along with accompanying remarks that he plans to deliver as part of a panel discussion there.

For the past two weeks, the Fed

has been criticized for its Nov. 3 decision to inject \$600 billion into the banking system through June, resuming an effort to lower long-term interest rates.

Those attacks continued Thursday. Speakers at a conference here, organized by the libertarian Cato Institute, warned that the Fed’s expansionary monetary policy could lead to asset-price bubbles like the housing boom that crashed in 2007.

Bernanke’s speech argues that U.S. unemployment is at “unacceptable” levels, and it gingerly wades into the fiscal policy debate roiling Washington.

“In general terms, a fiscal program that combines near-term measures to enhance growth and strong, confidence-inducing steps to reduce longer-term structural deficits would be an important complement to the policies of the Federal Reserve,” Bernanke will say.

He does not plan, however, to express a view on extending the Bush-era tax cuts, the most contentious fiscal policy choice facing

the White House and the lame-duck Congress.

Even so, by defending the Fed’s actions, calling for global rebalancing and hinting that more fiscal stimulus might be needed, Bernanke’s remarks amount to an endorsement of crucial elements of President Barack Obama’s economic approach.

But that endorsement, in turn, could further stoke criticism by congressional Republicans, who say the Fed is defying voters’ skepticism about large-scale government intervention in the economy and setting the stage for inflation down the road, and by foreign officials, who fear the Fed is trying to weaken the dollar to make U.S. exports more competitive.

Bernanke, a Republican economist who was first appointed by George W. Bush, will reiterate his argument that the Fed felt compelled to act because inflation is so low (about half of the Fed’s target of roughly 2 percent) and unemployment so high (stuck at nearly 10 percent for the past 18 months or so).

For the first time, Ireland admits it needs foreign bailout money

By David Jolly
and Niki Kitsantonis
THE NEW YORK TIMES

Irish officials acknowledged for the first time Thursday that Ireland was seeking aid from international lenders.

Ireland had been reluctant to accept any bailout that came with strings attached. But Thursday, Finance Minister Brian Lenihan told the Irish parliament that it would be a “very desirable outcome” if a contingency capital fund could be established with the European Union, the International Monetary Fund and the European Central Bank.

Patrick Honohan, governor of the Central Bank of Ireland, said in an interview on the Irish state broadcaster RTE that “we’re talking about a very substantial loan for sure” and that such a rescue would be “in the tens of billions” of euros.

Ben May, an economist with

Capital Economics in London, said the size of any bailout would depend on what the examiners found on the books of the Irish banks. He said that 60 billion euros (\$82 billion) might suffice if the amount was to cover only the government’s financing needs for the next few years but that more might be necessary to have firepower in reserve.

Additionally, he said, there was a concern that Irish banks might have trouble rolling over their debt after the European Central Bank began to withdraw the extraordinary measures it used to combat the financial crisis.

Also Thursday, experts from the European Union, the IMF and the European Central Bank arrived in Dublin to review the books of Irish lenders.

“I think we’re moving toward the next stage,” said Pier Carlo Padoan, chief economist of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. “I’m

encouraged by this decision; it’s the beginning of the end, hopefully.”

Concerns about Ireland’s fiscal state have contributed to volatility in bond markets in recent days and helped to keep the euro under pressure.

In Greece, where Europe’s sovereign debt troubles first surfaced late last year, the Finance Ministry presented to parliament a 2011 budget that would pave the way for further deep cuts while also increasing sales taxes and redoubling efforts to crack down on tax evasion.

Finance Minister George Papakonstantinou said that the latest measures were ambitious but attainable.

“These are not the desires and wishes of the Greek government,” he said, “but concrete measures that have been agreed” with the European Union and the IMF, which bailed out the country in May.

Obama forces showdown with Senate Republicans on arms pact with Russia

By Peter Baker
THE NEW YORK TIMES

WASHINGTON — Just two weeks after an election that left him struggling to find his way forward, President Barack Obama has decided to confront Senate Republicans in a make-or-break battle over arms control that could be an early test of his mettle heading into the final two years of his term.

Obama is pushing for a vote on a signature issue despite long odds, daring Republicans to block an arms-control treaty at the risk of disrupting relations with Russia and the international coalition that opposes Iran’s nuclear program. If he succeeds, Obama will demonstrate strength following the midterm election debacle. If he fails, he will reinforce the perception at home and abroad that his presidency has been weakened.

“It’s really high stakes,” said Geoffrey Kemp, a former national

security aide to President Ronald Reagan and a scholar at the Nixon Center, a research group in Washington. “I would say it’s the biggest gamble he’s taken so far, certainly on foreign policy.”

After months of quiet negotiations blew up this week, Obama on Thursday escalated ratification of the agreement, the so-called New Start treaty, into a public showdown, enlisting former Republican officials and assigning Vice President Joe Biden to work on it “day and night.” An allied group, the American Values Network, kicked off a television and e-mail campaign.

“It is a national security imperative that the United States ratify the New Start treaty this year,” said Obama, flanked by Henry A. Kissinger, James A. Baker III and Brent Scowcroft, all of whom served Republican presidents. “There is no higher national security priority for the lame-duck session of Con-

gress.”

Obama has no clear path to approval of the treaty without Sen. Jon Kyl of Arizona, the lead Republican negotiator, who declared this week that there was no time to reach an agreement this year on a nuclear modernization program that he wanted as the price for ratification.

The White House has only one Republican supporter, Sen. Richard G. Lugar of Indiana. A survey of 14 other Senate Republicans who were considered possible supporters found none who were willing to publicly back the treaty. Ten of them said they were undecided or were waiting for the same assurances as Kyl. Four did not respond, suggesting that approval may depend on changing Kyl’s mind.

Among those who agreed with Kyl that the issue should wait until next year was Sen. Bob Corker of Tennessee, one of three Republicans to vote for the treaty in committee in September.

12th-grade reading and math scores rise, surprising experts

Reading scores for the nation’s 12th-grade students have increased somewhat since they dropped to a historic low in 2005, according to results of the largest federal test, released Thursday. Average math scores also ticked upward.

Experts said the increases, after years of dismal achievement reports, were surprising because every year the nation’s schools are educating more black and Hispanic students, who on average score lower than whites and Asians.

The black-white achievement gap dates back more than a century, though researchers debate why it persists today. Researchers presume that language barriers pull down scores for Hispanics.

“It’s very good news because you have scores going up despite a demographic trend that pulls scores down,” said Grover J. Whitehurst, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution who directed the Department of Education’s research division in the Bush administration.

The math and reading tests, known as the National Assessment of Educational Progress and administered by the Department of Education, were given in spring 2009 to a representative national sample of about 50,000 12th-grade students.

Educators and school policymakers closely monitor the national assessment scores much the way corporate leaders and economists watch for changes in the gross domestic product or employment trends.

—Sam Dillon, *The New York Times*

Much fanfare for GM’s offering, but less-than-solid close

General Motors returned to the stock market Thursday with a car show on Wall Street and a congratulatory message from President Barack Obama, but the shares did not deliver a big surge above the price of the initial public offering.

Shares in the nation’s biggest automaker closed at \$34.19 in heavy trading, a 3.6 percent increase over the \$33-a-share price of its offering.

Investors had hoped for a larger bounce on the first day of trading for the company, which was rescued last year by a \$50 billion government bailout and swift trip through bankruptcy reorganization.

Industry analysts said it appeared that the decision this week by GM and its underwriters to bump up the stock’s target price from the original \$26 to \$29 range had absorbed the usual first-day rise for an initial public offering.

“That was where the bounce was,” said David Cole, chairman emeritus of the Center for Automotive Research in Ann Arbor, Mich.

The relatively small increase in the GM share price also meant that the U.S. taxpayers likely captured the best return possible in their first divesture of what was a 61 percent stake in the company.

Too high of a jump could have left GM and the Obama administration open to the charge that they priced the stock too low, abandoning paper profits that could have gone to taxpayers instead.

—Bill Vlasic, *The New York Times*

Traffic roundabouts spread in US

Traffic is going in circles. Armed with mounting data showing that roundabouts are safer, cheaper to maintain and friendlier to the environment, transportation experts around the country are persuading communities to replace traditional intersections with them.

There’s just one problem: Americans don’t know how to navigate them.

“There’s a lot of what I call irrational opposition,” said Eugene R. Russell Sr., a civil engineering professor at Kansas State University and chairman of a national task force on roundabouts, sounding mildly exasperated in a telephone interview. “They just don’t understand roundabouts.”

Many are being forced to learn, though, 25 years after Clark Griswold captured the public’s unease with roundabouts in “European Vacation,” spending a full day circumnavigating London’s famous Lambeth Bridge roundabout unable to escape its inner lane.

The Department of Transportation does not keep statistics on roundabouts, but experts agree that they are proliferating rapidly. They point to Wisconsin, which has built about 100 roundabouts since 2004, and plans to build 52 more in the 2011 construction season alone. Maryland is closing in on 200. Kansas has nearly 100.

All told, there are about 2,000 roundabouts in this country, most built in the last decade, according to Edward Myers, a senior principal at Kittelson & Associates, a transportation engineering and planning firm.

—Andrew Keh, *The New York Times*

Sweden seeks arrest of Wikileaks chief in rape case

LONDON — The Swedish prosecutor’s office said Thursday that a court in Stockholm had approved its request for arrest warrants to be issued for WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange for questioning on charges of rape and other sexual offenses. Assange has strongly denied the accusations.

Marianne Ny, director of the Stockholm prosecutor’s office, said in a statement that she had moved to have Assange extradited to Sweden on suspicion of “rape, sexual molestation and unlawful coercion.” The accusations were first made against Assange, 39, an Australian who created the whistle-blowers’ website, after he traveled to Sweden in mid-August and had brief relationships with two Swedish women that he has described as consensual.

Ny said in a telephone interview that the court had approved two arrest warrants, one applicable within the European Union and the other an international warrant that would be issued through Interpol. She said she had acted because “there is a risk of him fleeing.”

A Swedish court will ultimately decide whether to proceed with the charges, Ny said, as well as whether Assange should be detained or freed on bail.

—John F. Burns and Ravi Somaiya, *The New York Times*

WORLD & NATION WORLD & NATION WORLD & NATION WORLD & NATION WORLD

Cash crop

The case against U.S. farm subsidies

By Keith Yost
STAFF COLUMNIST

Serious discussions of fiscal reform are usually dominated by the big ticket items: health care spending, Social Security, and taxes. This is sensible — these are the areas responsible for the vast majority of our budget shortfall. But the efficiency losses from these programs are small relative to their size. When we debate them, we are rightfully concerned over the drag they create on our nation's productivity through disincentives to work. But the broader question, the one that makes reform difficult, is one of wealth redistribution: How much will we borrow from future generations to finance present consumption, and how much will we take from the rich to give to the poor?

In a sense, the biggest gains from fiscal reform might come not from major programmatic reforms, but from the hundred small cuts to the discretionary budget that eliminate pork and end special interest handouts. Ending these programs doesn't just help the government move its books into the black, but it grows the national pie by freeing resources from wasteful endeavors so that they can be used more constructively elsewhere.

The subsidies do not exist to correct some market imperfection, but rather distort the market away from its efficient equilibrium.

One such program is agricultural subsidies. This year, farm subsidies, whether they are in the form of direct subsidies, crop insurance, or some support, will total roughly \$14 billion, and were even higher in the previous two years.

Farm subsidies have little, if any, *raison d'être*. As economic policies, they are terrible — the subsidies do not exist to correct some market imperfection, but rather distort the market away from its efficient equilibrium. As wealth transfer programs, they're equally bad — since 1995, more than half of the subsidies went to fewer than 4 percent of the nation's subsidy-receiving farms. And as a national security program, they are a joke: not only is it difficult to conceive of any war-time scenario in which the U.S. would find itself in need of an indigenous food production capability beyond that which the free market would provide, but our sales of agricultural products abroad have not granted us any special leverage over our customers. To the contrary, if anyone benefits from the



ZYNGA GAME NETWORK

The very picture of waste.

subsidies, it's foreign consumers who get to dine on the American taxpayer's dime. A quote from the Congressional Budget Office: "Unlike tariffs, which tend to harm all countries, subsidies tend to benefit the countries purchasing the subsidized products and to harm the countries granting the subsidies."

If anything, the farm subsidies work at cross purposes with other policy goals. We subsidize high fructose corn syrup, but then campaign against sodas and sweets. We promote lighter milks as part of a low fat diet, but then spend tens of millions to get people to consume the excess milk fat (in one such program, the government partnered with Domino's Pizza to hawk a 40-percent-cheesier pizza). We pour millions into combating childhood obesity, but then stock our school lunch programs with the fatty excess from subsidized agricultural yields.

Even if farm subsidies had the hypothetical ability to improve the general welfare,

it is clear from their structure that they are nothing more than special interest pork. The vast majority of U.S. farm subsidies are concentrated on just a handful of crops, and some of the most heavily subsidized crops, such as cotton and tobacco, are not food crops at all. A food security program would

We seem to subsidize two types of crops: those farmed under industrial agriculture, and those grown in the early primary state of Iowa.

subsidize a broad swathe of nutritional sources. A wealth transfer program would subsidize the crops of the poorest farmers. A market-fixing program would subsidize crops with positive externalities. Instead, we seem to subsidize two types of crops:

those farmed under industrial agriculture, and those grown in the early primary state of Iowa.

It's not hard to see why agricultural subsidies are persistently difficult to dismantle. The cost of subsidies are spread thin across the taxpaying public — the benefits are concentrated on a wealthy few. A person making an average income will see just \$70 of his yearly tax bill go to agricultural subsidies — hardly enough to raise a complaint — but for the industrial farm magnates who are on the receiving end, farm subsidies mean millions in revenue. Over the past 15 years, a single company, Riceland Foods Incorporated, has been given \$550 million, courtesy of the American taxpayer.

At \$14 billion per year, farm subsidies amount to a mere 1.2 percent of the 2010 deficit, and are just a drop in the red ink of debt that is the U.S. federal budget. But if politicians cannot muster the courage to pick even this low hanging fruit, then there is little hope of more serious reform.

The value of being seriously funny

Exaggerations in humor expose the truth

By Ronan Killian McGovern
STAFF COLUMNIST

Who are those late night orators, keeping real and YouTube crowds from falling asleep? What work do they do and is it worthy of our respect? Should we succumb to the musings and quips of these observational scientists, irrelevant to our culture and irrelevant to our science? Beyond its cackles, laughs, chuckles and giggles, is comedy but an irrelevant escape into obscurity and inconsequence?

There aren't all that many ways to truly engage an audience. Oratory, by its nature, is quite a uni-directional means of communication. Great orators will tell you how engagement requires emotion; often pride, fear or anger. Humour too, is a product of emotional interaction, but is crucially different in that it provokes thoughts which can promote, rather than obscure, rationality. There is no way to appreciate a joke, other than to listen and engage with the words you hear. Once your mind wanders, you hear others laugh as you fall into isolated confusion. Then you fight to re-engage until you're once again involved. This is the power of humour, an oratorical tool to be dismissed at one's peril.

Once upon a time, that age old adage involving road crossing poultry was a joke of meaningful hilarity. Indeed, humour's attention-grabbing quality has often been

attributed to surprise; unlikely parallels between remote ideas and objects. Then again, sometimes humour is simply the realization that human beings have more in common than in difference. Still, it would be an oversimplification to think of comedy solely as a form of surprise and eccentricity. Comedy is both, and more. Of all oratorical styles, comedy is one of the most subtle and yet honest means of communication. What comedy is, is a license to spill the truth, to reveal one's honest opinions. We struggle to evaluate the opinions of businessmen and politicians from their well kept public personae. Evaluating comedians is easy. Their stereotypical views are not hidden, their preconceptions are laid bare and they have more incentive to harden rather than soften their truths.

What comedy is not, is accurate. In fact, one of the basic tricks up a comic's sleeve is exaggeration — the inflation of all proportions to effectively convey an idea. This, you might suggest, is one of the major downfalls of comedic presentations. However, the truth is that formal speeches made by politicians or businessmen do not contain more accuracy than those of comics. Instead, they contain less inaccuracy; a subtle but important difference. Politics seeks consensus, which through its cautious and vague wording avoids inaccuracy. Benign statements serve as a protective layer, hiding from us true thoughts and opinions. Comedy, by

contrast, involves the most utopic of aspirations, which at the cost of accuracy, employs the most stereotypical of narratives. A libellous concoction it may be, but the freedom afforded by humour is of immense illustrative value. In a sense, by the virtue of inaccuracy, comedy reveals a different truth — the truth of the orator's own opinions. The honesty of humour simultaneously offends and brings others closer, which, in our world of disguise, provides a rare opportunity to uncover our glossed-over preconceptions.

Over-exaggeration, when done judiciously, is a technique of great utility, allowing one's thoughts to be conveyed with great conviction. Interestingly, exaggeration and oversimplification are not unique to the comic world; one only has to consider our science. We have no qualms when it comes to making assumptions in science or approximations in engineering when clarity is at stake. Why might different standards be applied to communication? Of course, just as scientists must qualify their equations and engineers their calculations, orators too must qualify their theories, by their flaws and limitations.

Humor may seem liberal and rebellious, but is paradoxically more reliant on doctrines than any religion could be. Built on preconceptions, humour is nothing in the absence of context. In a world of libel and slander, humour liberates us from and yet ties us to a society of social norms.

UA UPDATES & ANSWERS

The UA President and Vice President met with the DSL and student members of HDAG last Friday. Minutes and slides from the meeting are available at ua.mit.edu.

At last week's Exec meeting, the UA discussed advice for the MIT 150 Open House. The information was passed to Events Committee chair Christine Chen '12, and we encourage further comments to be emailed to her. Announcements regarding the Spring budget were followed by discussion on FinBoard allocations and the regulation and policies of the board; an ad hoc committee may be formed to continue this discussion. Ideas included having two rounds of allocations per semester and a medium events fund.

Monday's Senate meeting saw the approval of Jessica Chen '14 to vice chair of the Committee of Public Relations, minor updates to the constitution, and a lengthy discussion on events between Senators and their constituents. The conversations intended to help Senators improve communication with and proactively find projects that benefit their constituents.

Finally, the UA invites you to have Thanksgiving Dinner with us on Tuesday! As space is limited, please RSVP with the online form. Feel free to direct any further questions to ua@mit.edu!

— Alec Lai,
UA Secretary-General

Steal My Comic

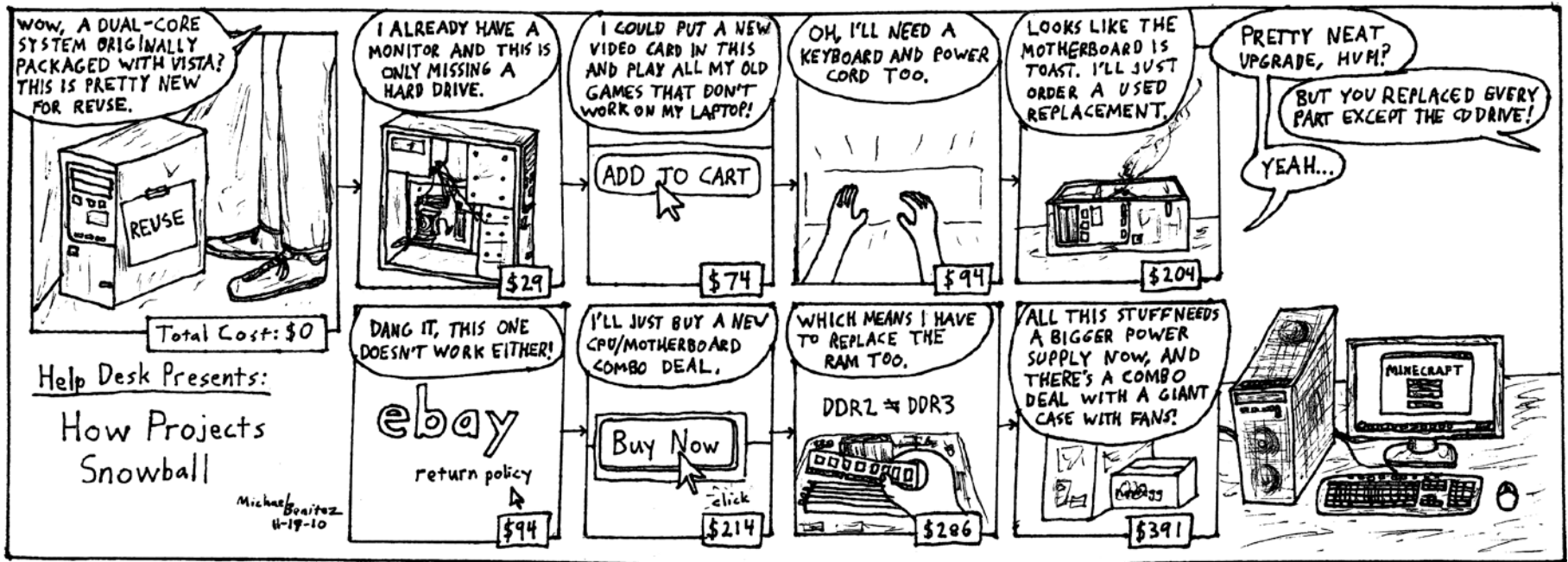
by Michael Ciuffo



STEALMYCOMIC.COM

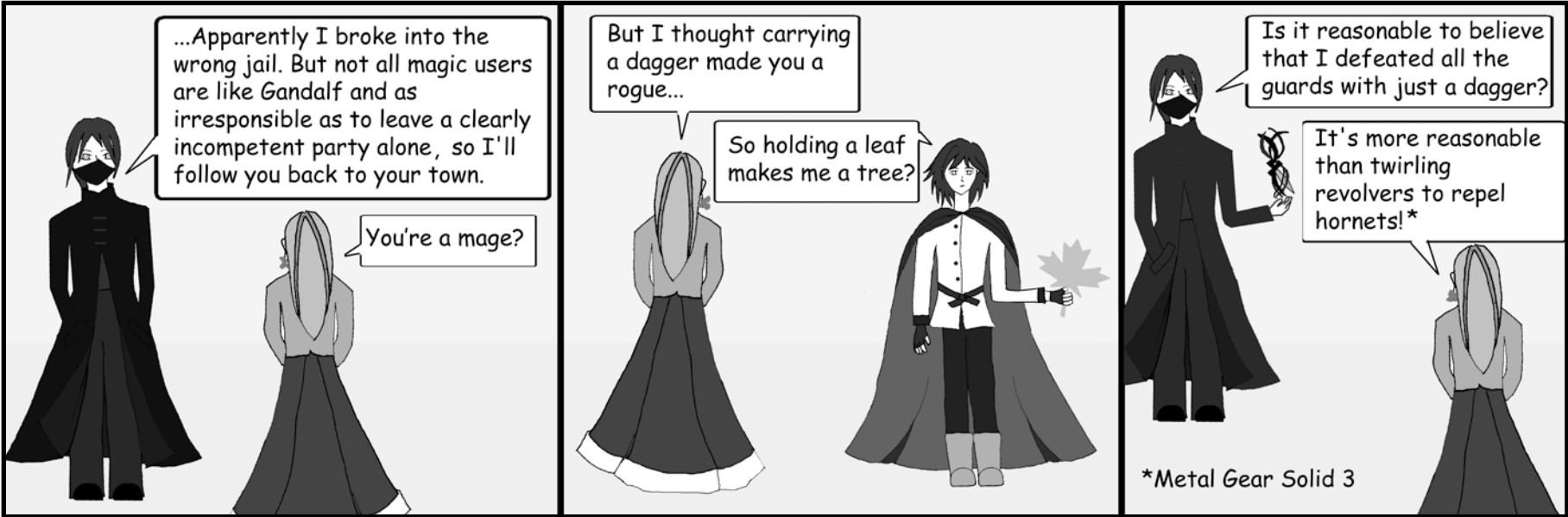
Help Desk

by Michael Benitez



Somewhere on the Search for Meaning...

by Letitia Li



Crossword Puzzle

Solution, page 11

ACROSS

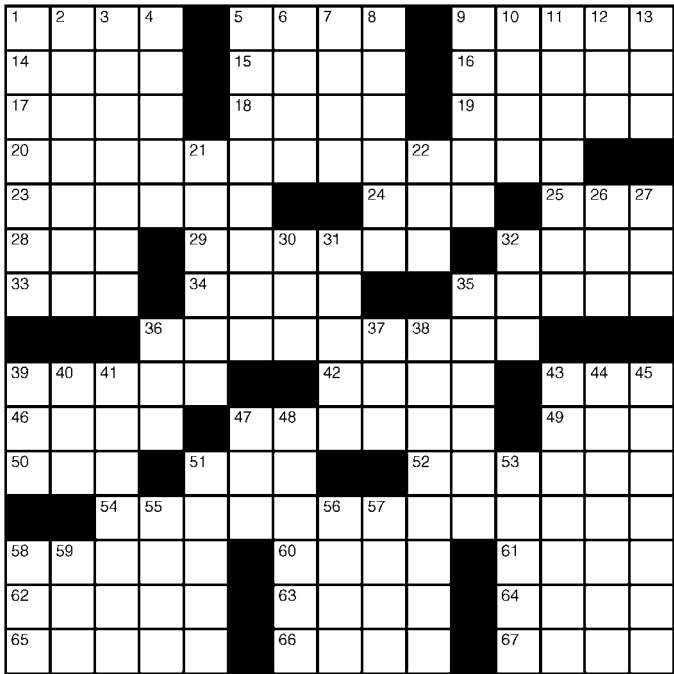
- 1 FBI agent
- 5 Droops
- 9 Full-scale attack
- 14 Costa
- 15 Bryce Canyon state
- 16 Flood protection barrier
- 17 NYC theater
- 18 Afrikaner
- 19 Circumvent
- 20 Start of Mario Cuomo quip
- 23 Go by, as time
- 24 Wet soil
- 25 One of those girls
- 28 Orch. section
- 29 Disney dwarf
- 32 Apple leftover
- 33 Scottish river
- 34 Eyeball impolitely
- 35 Flash of light
- 36 Part 2 of quip
- 39 Continuous
- 42 Launch forces
- 43 Big galoot
- 46 Sort of school

- 47 Concert sites
- 49 Tango team
- 50 Lawyers' org.
- 51 A Gabor
- 52 Thelma or Tex
- 54 End of quip
- 58 Overcharge
- 60 Alleviate
- 61 Andy's radio partner
- 62 Luster
- 63 Move just slightly
- 64 Amounted (to)
- 65 Balance sheet plus
- 66 Chuck
- 67 Low-blow weapon

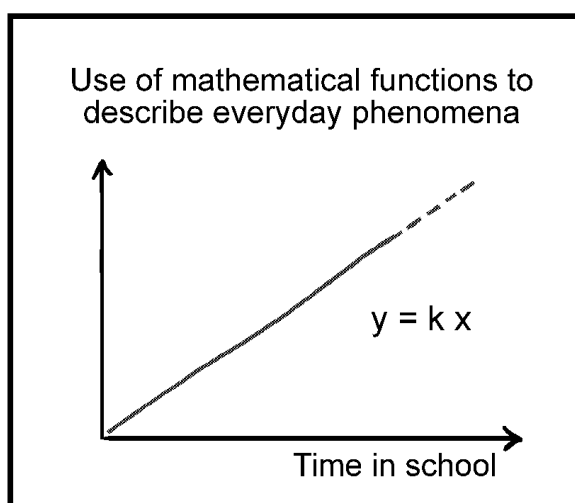
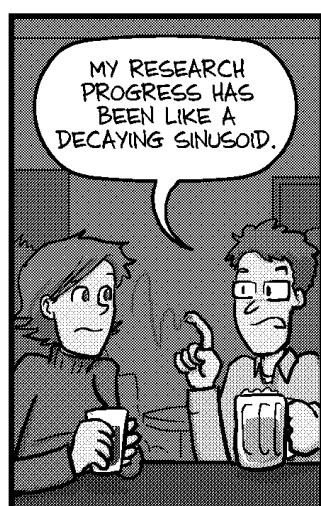
DOWN

- 1 Superlatively ashen
- 2 Canon rival
- 3 Insurance statistician
- 4 Rights grp.
- 5 Go under
- 6 On the peak of
- 7 Primal goddess of Greeks
- 8 Seafood order

- 9 Amalgam
- 10 Strauss of jeans
- 11 Sir Walter Scott hero
- 12 Danson or Koppel
- 13 Final letter
- 21 Equally beneficial
- 22 Regular Joe
- 26 Period
- 27 "The One I Love" group
- 30 Most remote, briefly
- 31 Blend together
- 32 Actor Gulager
- 35 Rumor spreader
- 36 Apple seed
- 37 Hankering
- 38 Ones who pine
- 39 Masseuse's milieu
- 40 Poetic planet
- 41 Associations of teams
- 43 Cushioned footstool
- 44 Truly amazing
- 45 Envision
- 47 Hail, to Caesar
- 48 Hardest to find
- 51 Big occasion



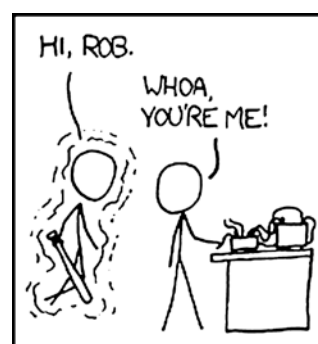
- 53 Follow
- 55 Curved molding
- 56 Amer.-Eur. alliance
- 57 Fertility goddess
- 58 Young ladies' org.
- 59 Sighs of delight



That Tomb Tomb Pow



Time Machine



We never see any time travelers because they all discover it's a huge mistake. This is also why your friend at the lab suddenly looked about a year older recently.

Easy Sudoku

Solution, page 14

5				1	8		3	4
8				4		1		
		1						5
9			1		4			
		5	9		6	2		
			5		3			1
4						9		
		9		6				3
1	5		2	3				8

Hard Sudoku

Solution, page 11

2				9	6	1		4
3	9				1	6		
7								
8		3	1	7	5			
				6				
			9	8	2	4		3
								9
		7	2				6	1
9		8	6	1				2

Instructions: Fill in the grid so that each column, row, and 3 by 3 grid contains exactly one of each of the digits 1 through 9.

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25 attend Baker protest

Dining, from Page 1

Chris Colombo, housemasters, HDAG members, and faculty members, the petition demands “major revisions to the dining plan.”

“This petition takes a different approach in that it brings all the background about dining into one central location, and that the website creates a forum for dialogue and discussion” said Keone Hon ’11, who created the website with a group of 6–8 students.

“We’re targeting all of campus, which demonstrates that dining is truly a campus-wide issue that will have implications everywhere,” he said.

The petition makes three demands: That the plan become either non-compulsory or “significantly reduced in its level of mandatory cost”; that it be revised to avoid the “drastic effects on dorms, clubs and other parts of Institute life”; and that the student body be asked, “Do you approve of the final plan we have proposed?”

“We want to send a strong message to HDAG: they’re not going far enough in the things they’re willing to concede. Currently, the plan is portrayed as something set in stone, but we hope that after we obtain really strong support for our petition, that conclusion we have to be thrown away...My hope is that the administration and HDAG members take this petition as a sincere declaration from students across campus that significant revisions need to be made. I have full faith that because they are committed to serving students’ interests that they will listen and resolve the concerns articulated in the petition,” said Hon, who was formerly the president of the Association of Student Activities.

In a response to the petition, Dean for Student Life Christopher Columbo said, “We have heard very clearly that students are concerned about cost, about the level of commitment for existing House Dining residents, and about the impact on the system once the new meal plans are put into place. Within HDAG, we are taking a serious look at their ideas to find a way to minimize the stress on the house communities without delaying or stopping the implementation process.”

Michael E. Plasmeier ’13, Vice President of Baker Facilities and Services and RFP Committee member, said, “The contract hasn’t been signed yet, and it’s not done until it’s signed. The sooner we can work towards a solution, the better. We want to move forward to meet the needs of all students.”

So far, according to data (from Thursday night) students from every living group have signed the petition. The dorms with the most signatures as of 1 a.m. this morning are:

Baker	143
Next House	113
Simmons	95
East Campus	226
Burton-Connor	116

Students who sign are asked to identify their year and residence, and are given the option to provide a comment if they choose.

Dining Protest at Baker

Thursday evening, a group of roughly 25 students met at Baker Dining to protest the proposed dining plan.

The premise of the protest, as explained in an e-mail sent out to participants by initiators Michael L. Pappas ’14 and Christopher W. Tam ’14, was that students would bring and prepare their own food to eat in the Dining Hall, sending the message to administrators that they are not “incapable of feeding themselves” and thus do not need the new dining plan.

Tam said, “It’s a way for people to do something about dining that’s more than signing a petition, and it can be fun at the same time.”

Carrying signs labelled “IHTEFP (I Hate the Food Plan)” the protesters entered around 6 p.m. and were greeted at the door by Baker Housemaster, Course XVI professor Dava J. Newman Ph.D. ’92, and Senior Assistant Dean of Students for Residential Life Henry J. Humphreys, who invited them to sit down and discuss their concerns with the dining plan.

After a few minutes, the students and administrators settled into conversations at various tables. Newman said, “The important thing is to engage students and learn their opinions. It’s nice to see everyone eating together and talking to each other.”

Humphreys said, “I think students have a right to voice their concerns. The students were being effective in making their point, but they were still respectful of the people who live at Baker.

Almas Abdulla ’14, McCormick Senator, said, “I’ve been taking around a petition around McCormick, and from all the people I’ve talked to, there is an overwhelming opposition to the dining plan. Many people said they would strongly consider moving out, which is a problem because McCormick is the only all-female dorm, so if someone is living there for personal reasons and they can’t pay for dining, they’d still be forced to.”

Many of the students in attendance, however, were residents of non-dining dorms. Patrick A. Hulin ’14, a resident of East Campus said, “I’m here because it’s clear to me that students don’t support the meal plan. People from non-dining dorms need to stand up for people in the dining dorms. For example, all my friends in Next House are considering moving out if the plan is implemented.”

When asked about the small turnout, Pappas seemed unfazed, “It’s not what I expected, but I’m happy with the outcome. I think this was more productive than if we had, say, 130 people, because we were able to have a civil dialogue, rather than just demonstrating that there were things we weren’t happy about, something I think the administration is already keenly aware of. At our table, we talked about dorm culture and possible ways to remodel the dining plan to make it work for all people.”

Asked about the low proportion of people from dining halls in attendance, Pappas said that some dining hall students may not have been able to participate because it was more difficult for them to prepare their own meal for the protest without access to kitchens. “However, I think those who did come still represent the general opinions coming from all sorts of different students, despite the apparent imbalance,” he said in an e-mail later that evening.

Tam added, “It’s possible that people from other dining halls were just having dinner somewhere else. In the end, at least we did something.”

The online petition against the dining plan

Dear President Hockfield, Chancellor Clay, Dean Colombo, Housemasters of MIT, Members of HDAG, and Members of the Faculty:

We, the undersigned, write to voice our objection to the new dining plan proposed by the House Dining Advisory Group (HDAG), which is slated to begin next fall.

We have read the specific details of the proposed dining plan:

- We understand that there will be a “take out” option.
- We understand that the initial mandatory commitment will decrease over time: \$3800 for freshmen, \$3800 or \$3400 for sophomores, and \$3800, \$3400, or \$2900 for juniors and seniors.
- We understand that hours will be staggered across the system in order to accommodate more schedules.

We **still** do not support this plan for the following reasons, which are further detailed below:

- It nearly doubles the cost of food.
- The motivation given for its launch — an annual deficit of \$600,000 — is misleading and most likely is not even solved by it.
- It will cause many of us to move if we refuse to accept the expense. This negatively impacts both dining and non-dining dorms.
- It will hurt FSILGs and clubs, which are essential components of the MIT experience, by discouraging dining dorm residents from participating in dinnertime activities.
- It is not right for us and not right for MIT. Our opinion was ignored by HDAG the first time around; we demand that the plan be revised immediately to earn our approval.

Expense

The new plan is too expensive — after accounting for missed meals, IAP, and lunches, **it will nearly double the cost of food.** Several surveys indicate that current student expenditures average \$1700 (non-dining dorms) to \$2300 (dining dorms) annually, while expenditures under the dining plan will easily exceed \$5000.

The high cost of the plan relative to existing costs is not clear from the information published by the house dining website, as misleading comparisons and questionable data analysis obscure the reality. Students must be given full and accurate information about costs and in this case they were not.

As such, we object — both to the expense and to the way the expense is inaccurately portrayed.

Sustainability

We also reject the argument that the new dining plan is necessary to make dining sustainable.

First, we feel that the notion of sustainability needs clarification. The supporters of the HDAG plan will gladly remind us that the current house dining system receives a subsidy of approximately \$600,000 annually, but they often fail to mention that the subsidy comes from profits from other areas of dining, such as W20. In other words, the dining system as a whole is self-sufficient. Many departments have individual business units with varying levels of profitability; it is unfair to portray house dining as a major tax on the whole Institute budget.

More to the point, we expect that **the cost to financial aid will exceed any savings from eliminating the deficit, rendering any arguments about sustainability useless.** (The only case in which this would not occur would be if MIT failed to increase its financial aid to reflect the higher costs under mandatory dining, in which case there are bigger issues in play.) We have not seen the plan’s authors address these additional costs to MIT, and so we find the repeated emphasis on financial sustainability to ring hollow indeed.

More generally, we object to the practice of using the supposed deficit as an unquestionable motivation for expanding the dining system. Cries of “we have no choice; the bottom line demands it” are immediately suspect when used to justify expanding, not shrinking, a comparatively expensive program.

Negative impact on both dining and non-dining dorms

The plan forces us to move out if we are unwilling to pay for meals that we will not eat.

It will destroy the community within dining dorms by providing upperclassmen with a financial incentive to move out, making it more difficult to develop long-standing culture.

It will destroy culture within non-dining dorms by providing an influx of students who chose to move into one of these dorms due to the lower cost, even if the culture is not right for them.

It will also increase the length of inter-dorm waitlists, decreasing mobility for students who wish to switch dorms for other reasons.

We are particularly disturbed that the existence of expensive mandatory dining plans in some dorms will result in **segregation by wealth.** Egalitarianism is a fundamental tenet of MIT and we cannot support a plan that creates such different costs between dorms that poorer students will be driven away and forced to cluster together.

MIT’s housing system, which allows students to find a home that truly suits them culturally, is one of the unique parts of our undergraduate experience. Elevating the cost of living in a dining dorm forces some students to compromise their cultural preferences to save money; **this is fundamentally at odds with the MIT philosophy of student housing.**

Negative impacts on FSILGs/clubs

FSILGs are an essential part of the MIT community; while individual students residing in their FSILGs would mostly avoid the mandatory dining plan, their organizations would face significant effects.

Freshmen or other on-campus members who are on the mandatory dining plan are less inclined to forfeit a prepaid meal to attend dinner with their FSILG, which is an important bonding time for many FSILGs.

Clubs use food to attract attendees to events; having students purchase a full dinner plan in advance will hurt attendance at lectures and meetings where free food is often a powerful incentive.

MIT’s strong student activities and FSILG systems are significant to the undergraduate experience. **The new dining plan will hurt these integral aspects of student life by decreasing participation;** this effect has not been properly investigated.

Disregard for student opinion

We reject HDAG’s argument that it adequately considered student opinion by responding to questions and concerns throughout the proposal-forming process.

Our signatures to this petition are a clear indication that HDAG did not adequately consider our student opinion. **HDAG never asked us the only question that truly measures student support:** ‘Do you approve of the final plan we have proposed?’ This petition is our answer to this question: **we do not approve of the plan.**

We are dismayed by the argument that “everything will be okay” in four years once the system reaches steady state, since the current students have graduated and the new students have “gotten used to” the plan. Even if this argument were true, it completely discounts the experience of those of us who are here now.

HDAG sees the new dining plan as an opportunity to reshape students lives for the better, for example by increasing the rate at which students engage in the healthy habit of eating breakfast. **We reject this view as paternalistic and uninformed.** The party best-equipped to assess the needs of future students is us, the current students, and we say that this new dining plan does not fit the needs of present or future students.

Conclusion

The proposed dining plan will harm many of the unique aspects of MIT; it is wrong for us and wrong for MIT.

We demand major revisions to the dining plan. In particular, implementing the HDAG proposal but “grandfathering” it in to give current students an opt-out choice is not a solution to our concerns. While this might be attempted to appease current students, we are not willing to sacrifice future students by leaving them to deal with costs far in excess of the MIT norm. Moreover, a grandfathered version of the HDAG plan does not satisfy our concerns about the effect on our dorm culture or on our clubs and FSILGs; it still promotes wealth-segregated dorms; and it is fundamentally at odds with the philosophy that students live where they find the best cultural fit.

Rather, we demand the following:

- That the dining plan be revised to make the a meal plan either non-compulsory or significantly reduced in its level of mandatory cost.
- That the new plan be reviewed to ensure that the drastic effects on dorms, clubs, and other parts of Institute life cited here are avoided.
- That the undergraduate student body be presented with the revised plan and asked the only question that truly measures student support: “*Do you approve of the final plan we have proposed?*”



JOHN A. HAWKINSON—THE TECH

Promoters of the most recent campus dining petition late Wednesday night plastered the door of Chris Colombo, Dean for Student Life, with signs saying “sayNO.mit.edu,” the website of the petition.

Worm in Iran was perfect for sabotaging centrifuges

By William J. Broad
and David E. Sanger
THE NEW YORK TIMES

Experts dissecting the computer worm suspected of being aimed at Iran’s nuclear program have determined that it was precisely calibrated in a way that could send nuclear centrifuges wildly out of control. Their conclusion, while not de-

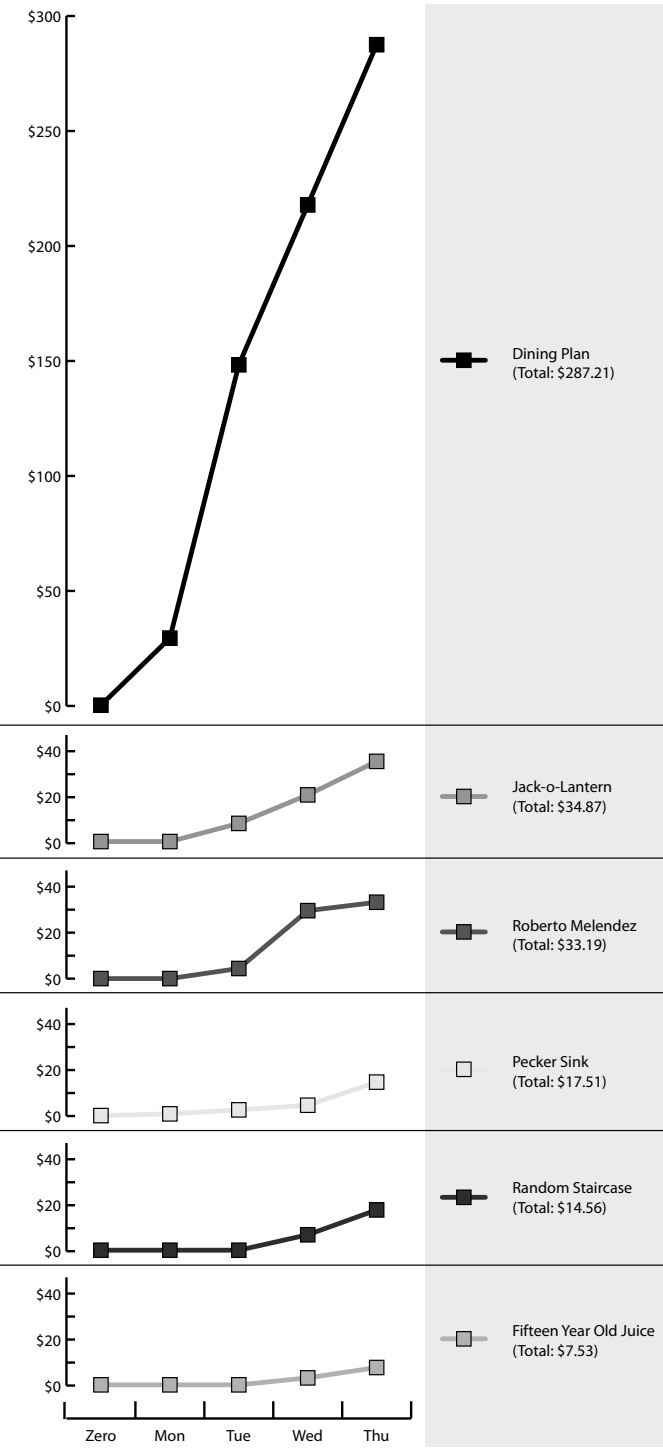
finitive, begins to clear some of the fog around the Stuxnet worm, a malicious program detected this year on computers, primarily in Iran but also India, Indonesia and other countries. The paternity of the worm is still in dispute, but in recent weeks officials from Israel have broken into wide smiles when asked whether Israel was behind the attack, or knew

who was. American officials have suggested it originated abroad. The new forensic work narrows the range of targets and deciphers the worm’s plan of attack. Computer analysts say Stuxnet does its damage by making quick changes in the rotational speed of motors, shifting them rapidly up and down. Changing the speed “sabotages the normal operation of the industrial control process,” Eric Chien, a researcher at the computer security company Symantec, wrote in a blog post.

Those fluctuations, nuclear analysts said in response to the report, are a recipe for disaster among the thousands of centrifuges spinning in Iran to enrich uranium, which can fuel reactors or bombs. Rapid changes can cause them to blow apart. Reports issued by international inspectors reveal that Iran has experienced many problems keeping its centrifuges running, with hundreds removed from active service since summer 2009. Intelligence officials have said they believe that a series of covert

programs are responsible for at least some of that decline. So when Iran reported this year that it was battling the Stuxnet worm, many experts immediately suspected that it was a state-sponsored cyberattack. The computer analysis, Albright’s Wednesday report concluded, “makes a legitimate case that Stuxnet could indeed disrupt or destroy” Iranian centrifuge plants. The latest evidence does not prove Iran was the target, and there have been no confirmed reports of industrial damage linked to Stuxnet.

Ugliest Man on Campus totals



SOURCE: ALPHA PHI OMEGA; GRAPHIC BY SARAH RITTER—THE TECH

APO’s Ugliest Man on Campus (UMOC) competition returns this year, with a booth in Lobby 10. Passers-by are invited to vote for the candidate that they think is ugliest, with one penny equaling one vote.

In a twist, this year’s contest returns to the original name (“Ugliest Man”), when in some prior years the name was “Ugliest Manifestation.” Despite that, this year, while each candidate is technically a person, most people have chosen to run on behalf of objects, such as the dining plan.

Each candidate designates a charity to receive the proceeds if they win. Allan E. Miramonti ’13, who is representing the Dining Plan, has selected Child’s Play; James M. Penna ’14 is representing a rotting jack-o-lantern, selected World Education.

Roberto J. Melendez ’12 is representing himself, and has selected Fundahmer. Random Hall’s “Pecker Floor,” representing their sink, has selected the American Cancer Society; Pecker Floor is also running “Fifteen-year-old Juice,” and has selected the CDC Foundation. Jordan A. Goldstein ’14 is representing a staircase at Random Hall, and has selected Doctors Without Borders.

Solution to Hard Sudoku

from page 7

2	8	5	7	9	6	1	3	4
3	9	4	5	2	1	6	8	7
7	1	6	8	4	3	2	9	5
8	4	3	1	7	5	9	2	6
5	2	9	3	6	4	7	1	8
6	7	1	9	8	2	4	5	3
1	6	2	4	5	8	3	7	9
4	5	7	2	3	9	8	6	1
9	3	8	6	1	7	5	4	2

Solution to Crossword

from page 6

G	M	A	N	S	A	G	S	B	L	I	T	Z
R	I	C	A	U	T	A	H	L	E	V	E	E
A	N	T	A	B	O	E	R	E	V	A	D	E
Y	O	U	C	A	M	P	A	I	G	N	I	N
E	L	A	P	S	E	M	U	D	H	E	R	
S	T	R	G	R	U	M	P	Y	C	O	R	E
T	A	Y	P	O	G	L	E	G	L	E	A	M
			P	O	E	T	R	Y	Y	O	U	
S	O	L	I	D		G	E	E	S		O	A
P	R	E	P		A	R	E	N	A	S	T	W
A	B	A		E	V	A		R	I	T	T	E
		G	O	V	E	R	N	I	N	P	R	O
G	O	U	G	E		E	A	S	E		A	M
S	H	E	E	N		S	T	I	R		C	A
A	S	S	E	T		T	O	S	S		K	N

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3k pages a semester?

Group considers Athena printing quotas

Athena printing, from Page 1

use a system called Pharos, which is currently being tested at the Student Center and at Baker House. A student sends a job to a printer, but the printer doesn't start printing until the students goes to the printer and presses a button or swipes an ID.

Currently, impatient students often submit jobs to multiple printers, especially when the printers are busy. They end up printing the same thing multiple times because it difficult to remove the extra jobs.

The new system allows for a single queue for each type of printer. For instance, students would be able to submit a job to the black-and-white queue, and then go to any black-and-white printer to release the job. This improves convenience and reduces the waste that is associated with abandoned documents.

Over the summer, two pilot printers started using the system — one in the student center and the other at Baker House. The printer in the student center is named "Lerman" (after former Vice Chancellor Steven R. Lerman '72, who was instrumental in the early days of Athena and recently left MIT to become Provost of George Washington University).

IS&T has been working with the UA to invite student participation in implementation efforts. The UA formed an Athena Printing Committee on October 25 to facilitate student communication on the topic.

Allan E. Miramonti '13, the chair of the Printing committee, said that feedback has been "largely positive ... people are actually excited about the idea, and while some concerns exist, people on the whole seem to be happy with it."

The UA and the working group have also been in discussion as to whether jobs should be released through a touch screen and keyboard, or by swiping an MIT ID card.

3,000 page quota

In the initial recommendations, the working group proposed a quota of 3,000 pages per semester be created in the new, comprehensive system. They determined that only 100 members of the MIT community go over this quota, so it would not affect the overwhelming majority of Athena users. Some suggest a fee of about 10 cents could be charged for each additional page.

The point is not to get students to pay more for printing, said Oliver Thomas, Manager of the Faculty and Student Experience at IS&T. "The point of the quota and the hold-and-release piece is to save money by reducing waste and encouraging responsible behavior, though even that is subservient to reducing waste."

There has been some concern that the introduction of the new system could increase the number of people going over the quota since users will start to believe that 3,000 pages is the baseline for "too much."

In response, Thomas explained that there was experimental value in determining the use-cases that may cause a student to go over the 3,000 page quota.

"If there were an instance where a student needs to print over 3,000 pages for academic purposes, we could start a conversation with the department and understand the reasons behind such a practice. If, however, it were an abuse of the system for frivolous reasons, charging a minimal fee for overages seems appropriate because the use of Athena printers is discouraged in such situations."

IS&T officers resources to learn more about printing on Athena and reducing paper consumption; see <http://web.mit.edu/printing/>.

If you have any ideas for implementation or you'd like to take part in the design efforts, contact: ua-printing-chairs@mit.edu and student-printing-feedback@mit.edu.

Other Athena changes on the horizon

Scanners

Though initially interested in deploying multi-function printers, the Athena Working Group will be testing out the idea of scanners in Athena clusters. The pilot scanners will be separate from printers and will be full-featured photo and document scanners that can scan to a file directly. The working group decided against using multi-function printers because many students need higher quality scans than the typical multi-function scanner can provide. (There might still be pilot multi-function devices to test out scanning in general.)

Quickstations and thin clients

Currently, there are 44 Athena quickstations on campus, and more are slowly being installed. The working group hopes it will be able to add about five more stations by IAP.

IS&T is in the process of experimenting with "thin clients": cheaper, slower machines that run their software off a remote server. The server does all the heavy lifting, so the computer that accesses the servers (the client) doesn't need to be very capable.

Such a system makes the quickstation computers resistant to tampering, since all their software is located on the remote server. The machines could also be cheaper because they don't need to speedy or state-of-the-art — the group thinks it can save \$1,500 off each computer.

One challenges associated with the thin-client infrastructure is that the system works a lot better with Windows than Linux. But Athena machines run Linux systems. It will take some time to determine which system — Athena VMware or Windows VMware — works better.

Looking at cost, efficiency, and sustainability

Data from the initial working group recommendations showed that about 20 percent of the paper printed at the high-traffic W20 Athena cluster is never used. The hold-and-release model will not only save paper, but also reduce wear-and-tear on machines and save toner.

Athena printers use only about 60 percent of the paper purchased for them; the rest disappears. The hope is that number will decrease because the printing budget for dorm and campus printers has been unified.

Regarding cost-effectiveness of the current system, Oliver Thomas, of IS&T, said, "that the hope is that we will break even this year due to input costs of licensing for Pharos, etc. The nice thing about Pharos is that it helps us implement policies and look for patterns that we might be able to do something about. We hope that this system will help us to better allocate our resources to tailor to student needs."

Future timeline

Over IAP, if all goes well, the printers in all Athena clusters will switch to hold-and-release, and scanners will be added to some locations.

In the next couple of weeks, there will be a strong push for student feedback on the existing pilot programs. IS&T and the UA hope to put forth more programs that address different configurations in multiple contexts (because dorm printers have different needs than central campus printers). The goal is that by the beginning of summer, all Athena printers will have the Pharos component added to them.

The second phase of improvements will look into location placement of Athena clusters and quick-stations. It is still under discussion, and the working group hopes to optimize infrastructure and student needs. The introduction of team-spaces adjacent to Athena clusters and spaces conducive to more professor-student interaction are central.

Thomas believes that this phase will require significant input from both students and faculty. "We want a combination of broad-base input from students and some deep participation from students. More faculty participation is always helpful but it is difficult to get their help because their availability is so scarce. We'd ideally like to use their input to conduct experiments to see how we can best maximize our resources."

"Ultimately," he said, "the renovation of the Athena printing system is a work in progress."

— Divya Srinivasan



JORDAN T. MOLDOW

The Athena Working group hopes that by using a "hold-and-release system," printing waste will be minimized. Right now, as much as 20 percent of printed pages are never collected.

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Evidence for Gene Flow from Neanderthals into Modern Humans

Prof. David Reich
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Harvard Medical School

Inherited Disease and Human Evolution

Prof. David Housman
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Dell hid a plague of faulty capacitors, documents reveal

By Ashlee Vance
THE NEW YORK TIMES

SAN FRANCISCO — Documents unsealed Thursday in a three-year-old lawsuit against Dell Inc. have raised more questions about how the company handled an unprecedented number of faulty computers sold to governments, schools and corporations from 2003 to 2005.

A judge in the U.S. District Court in North Carolina unsealed hundreds of documents linked to a lawsuit filed by Advanced Internet Technologies that had accused Dell of trying to hide defects in its desktop computers from customers.

For instance, the court documents show that the City of New York filed incident reports with Dell on 20.2 percent of a batch of 5,000 computers purchased during this period. A purchase of 2,800 computers by Microsoft resulted in issues with 11 percent of the machines; General Electric Co., William W. Backus Hospital, Denison University and the Montana Justice Department were among dozens of other organizations that experienced similar results.

The documents also show how Dell had resisted informing many of its customers about the extent of the problem. Despite widespread reports from the field, Dell salespeople and technicians were encouraged to keep customers in the dark about the known defects that left computers inoperable.

As it tried to deal with the mounting issues, Dell began ranking customers by importance, putting first those who might move their accounts to another PC maker, followed by those who might curtail sales and giving the lowest priority to those who were bothered but still willing to stick with Dell. The company declined to recall the systems and did what it called “proactive field replacements” for customers that met certain sales and failure rate thresholds. In September, Dell settled the lawsuit with Advanced Internet Technologies without disclosing the terms of the agreement. The New York Times sought access to the documents that had remained under seal.

The issues with the computers revolved around the capacitors that dot computer motherboards. A typical Dell computer could have up to 20 of these capacitors, which cost a fraction of a penny each and help regulate electrical operations of the machines.

Earlier this decade, capacitors made in Asia with a bad chemical recipe were sold to numerous makers of televisions, PCs and other electronic devices. The capacitors would bulge when they became too hot and cause devices to malfunction or stop working altogether.

Dell, Hewlett-Packard Co. and Apple Inc. and others were aware of these issues and tried to pull faulty computers from the market and to fix the computers. Even while keeping an eye on the problem, though, Dell continued to receive faulty capacitors from suppliers.

It waged a three-year battle to identify the troublesome components. Studies conducted by Dell and a third party showed that the company shipped 11.8 million computers from May of 2003 to July 2005 that were at risk of breaking.

What shocked customers and Dell most was the rate at which the computers failed.

For example, the unsealed court documents included a Dell study from 2004 in which the component issues charged past the company’s initial forecasts. In June of that year, Dell expected that a minimum of 12 percent of its SX270 Optiplex computers would result in incident reports from customers over a period of three years. By September, Dell raised the minimum incident report forecast to 45 percent and noted it could run as high as 97 percent.

The same Dell study covered issues with the GX270 computer and noted that the company planned to help customers who had bought more than 50 computers and who had at least 5 percent of those systems fail. Other customers fell into the “fix on fail” category, meaning they would need to report issues to Dell after their computers had broken, the documents show.

Internal Dell presentations from this time and later about the capacitor problems suggested that employees “Don’t bring this to customer’s attention proactively” and “emphasize uncertainty.”

Dell also provided a type of question and answer sheet to employees, which included this exchange: “Why has Dell not taken a more proactive approach to rectifying the issue? Our approach to this issue delivers the best customer experience because it minimizes disruption.”

In 2005, Dell took a \$300 million charge tied to the cost of fixing or replacing troubled computers.

In regard to the Dell internal studies, David Frink, a company spokesman said, “The percentages were theoretical maximums and significantly exceeded the actual failure rates. That said, Dell actively investigated failures, we fixed on fail computers that suffered a capacitor issue and we extended the warranties on all the possibly affected motherboards.”

Dell said it replaced motherboards on 22 percent of the 21 million Optiplex computers it shipped between 2003 and 2005.

“This was an industrywide issue and to our knowledge no other manufacturer issued a recall either,” Frink said.

Dell officials have characterized the Optiplex problems as an old issue and noted that the company has since improved its systems for handling these types of problems.

The Dell presentations that instructed employees on how to respond to customer questions around the faulty computers included reassurances that no data loss would occur when a PC failed.

The court documents, however, depicted customers complaining of data loss issues.

“Are we just going to continue to go through the typical support channels to have the motherboards replaced when they fail ... or will we have a final resolution to this never-ending stagnation of Dell’s reluctance/reticence/red tape?,” wrote Mark O’Dell, an employee with Choice Hotels, in an e-mail to Dell. “When will Dell actually take care of the problem and fix our system failures?”

Gehry helps out in Chicago

Fortunately, it’s not like the furniture is going to leak

By Fred A. Bernstein
THE NEW YORK TIMES

It’s not every day that Frank Gehry designs lobby furniture for an office building.

But Gehry made an exception for the Inland Steel Building, a Chicago landmark, because he owns a part of it.

The story of how the architect became an accidental real estate developer began in the early 1960s, when Gehry (who grew up in Toronto) first encountered the Inland Steel Building. Designed by Walter Netsch and Bruce Graham of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, it was completed in 1958. Gehry said he admired their decision to clad the building in steel without hiding that material’s imperfections.

Nearly half a century later, at a party, Gehry found himself talking to a retired real estate developer, Perry Herst Jr., about their shared love for the building. Rumors were going around that the building was falling apart, and that its current owner — St. Paul Travelers Cos. —

was looking to sell it.

After a couple of vodkas, Gehry recalled, he urged Herst, the former chairman of the Tishman West Cos., to put together a group of investors to rescue the building. Herst got in touch with his cousin Alfred D’Ancona, a Chicago investor, who then reached out to Harvey Camins, the chief executive of Camins Tomasz Kritt, a real estate brokerage.

Camins then phoned St. Paul Travelers. “St. Paul had no desire to sell the building, which,” he added, “was not in disrepair.”

But that changed, he said, “when I mentioned Frank’s name.” A few months later, he said, Gehry flew to Chicago. They were joined by the St. Paul people, and had “a nice little meeting” at which Gehry talked about wanting to preserve the building. “It was critical that Frank was involved,” he said. “That really helped solidify the deal.”

In 2005, a partnership led by Camins and D’Ancona paid \$44.5 million for the building and gave Gehry a 2.5 percent stake.

“He didn’t have to write a check,” Camins said. “We made him a partner because he brought the deal to us.”

But if the deal was lucrative for Gehry, it also led to disappointment. Instead of bringing in Skidmore, Owings & Merrill to update the entire building, as Gehry had proposed, the Camins group began a piecemeal renovation. Gehry said he believed the superficial changes made the building — and him — look bad.

“I complained. I was nasty to them,” Gehry said. Camins said: “Frank was not happy, and rightfully so. None of us was happy.”

He added: “We started the renovation work; we did some of the bathrooms and updated the lobby. But when the market softened and we couldn’t get the rent we needed, the renovation plan got put on hold. There was only so much we could do.”

“When the lobby is completed, Cohen said, “It will still be SOM’s Inland Steel — but Frank will be there.”



SARANG KULKARNI—THE TECH

Peter Thiel, co-founder of PayPal, speaks at the MIT Enterprise Forum of Cambridge this past Tuesday. He announced the program “Twenty under Twenty” which would fund twenty people under twenty years old for two years, allowing them to pursue entrepreneurial goals.



TURNER K. BOHLEN

Stephen Giandomenico ‘11 is thrust to the front of the stage during Dramashop’s production of Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind. The show features 30 short two minute play, appearing today at 8 p.m. and tomorrow at 10 p.m. in Kresge Little Theater. Admission is \$1 times the number of the roll of a die.

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Solution to Easy Sudoku

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5	9	2	6	1	8	7	3	4
8	3	6	7	4	5	1	2	9
7	4	1	3	9	2	6	8	5
9	7	8	1	2	4	3	5	6
3	1	5	9	8	6	2	4	7
6	2	4	5	7	3	8	9	1
4	6	3	8	5	7	9	1	2
2	8	9	4	6	1	5	7	3
1	5	7	2	3	9	4	6	8

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